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## FACT SHEET

March 2008

### Improving Trial Court Facilities: Fiscal Year 2008–2009 Funding Requests

#### *Butte—New North Butte County Courthouse*

Los Angeles—New Southeast Los Angeles Courthouse  
Tehama—New Red Bluff Courthouse  
Yolo—New Woodland Courthouse

In April 2007, the Judicial Council adopted an updated Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan that includes 175 new-construction, major renovation, and expansion projects estimated to cost \$9.7 billion (January 2007 dollars). The Judicial Council also directed staff of the Administrative Office of the Courts (AOC) to submit, as part of the fiscal year 2008–2009 budget process, funding requests for four new trial court facilities. The initial funding request for these four urgently needed projects is \$61.6 million in FY 2008–2009, which would be funded by bond funds. Their total project costs are estimated to be \$433.5 million. If approved, these projects mark important progress toward implementing needed projects for trial courts across California. As noted below, the judicial branch will additionally pursue alternative revenue sources over the next several years to support the full implementation of the statewide Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan.

#### New North Butte County Courthouse

A new North Butte County Courthouse is proposed by the AOC for initial funding of \$14.5 million for FY 2008–2009. The new facility will house five courtrooms. The estimated total cost for this courthouse of approximately 60,000 gross square feet is \$79.7 million (escalated to construction mid-point in Spring 2012). This project is ranked in the Immediate Need Project Priority Group of the Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan and is one of the highest priority capital-outlay projects for the judicial branch.

#### No Security, Severe Overcrowding, Poor Physical Conditions, and Reduced Access to Court Services

The proposed new courthouse will accomplish the following immediately-needed improvements to the superior court and enhance its ability to serve the public:

- Consolidate two unsafe, overcrowded, and physically deficient facilities—one in the City of Chico and one in the Town of Paradise;
- Expand court services—including the return of criminal case processing to the northern part of the county—by increasing judicial-proceedings capacity, moving

from three to five courtrooms to accommodate one funded Senate Bill 56 (Dunn) judgeship and one new judgeship in Assembly Bill 159 (Jones) in FY 2007–2008;

- Enhance access to court services by providing expanded services in the county's population center (i.e., the greater Chico/Paradise Ridge area) where the majority of social services, justice partners, and local bar members are also located; and
- Reduce overcrowding at the existing Butte County Courthouse in the City of Oroville.



No Security Screening at the Chico Courthouse

### Local Government Collaboration on Project

The Butte County Board of Supervisors, the City of Chico, and the Butte County Bar Association each support the need to replace the existing Chico and Paradise courthouses with a new facility in the greater Chico area. The AOC will work collaboratively with the County of Butte to select a site for the new facility and to develop a project that meets the goals of the local community. The County of Butte is currently in the process of implementing its county-wide facilities master plan, which is aimed at consolidating their greater Chico area offices into a new northern government complex. The new courthouse project is aligned with this plan, and the county is committed to locating its future complex in a location suitable to both the local court and the AOC. In doing so, the likelihood exists that a donation, a land swap, or a sale at a below-market rate would be available, either directly with the state or through the county, to provide a site for the new courthouse.

### Long-term Funding Needs

The California judicial branch is exploring additional, alternative means to fund the state's sizable need for courthouse infrastructure improvements. Options include pursuing bond funding—consideration will be given to both revenue and general obligation bonds. Another potential consideration involves increasing criminal penalties and other filing fees to be contributed to the State Court Facilities Construction Fund for the sole purpose of funding court construction projects. While these initiatives evolve, the Judicial Council will pursue annual funding requests to begin to address the most critical deficiencies in the state's courthouses.

### More Information

A project feasibility report for the New North Butte County Courthouse, dated June 1, 2007, was prepared by AOC staff. This report documents the poor functional and physical conditions of the existing Chico and Paradise court facilities in Butte County, explores options for how best to meet the needs of the court and of the public, and estimates the cost to construct a new facility. This document can be downloaded from the following Web site:

[http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final\\_butte\\_pfr\\_-\\_to\\_dof\\_-\\_07\\_12\\_21.pdf](http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/programs/occm/documents/final_butte_pfr_-_to_dof_-_07_12_21.pdf)

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